

Appendix O: Biological Resources Survey

**A BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT FOR
THE PROPOSED PG&E POWER GENERATING FACILITY,
3497 Main Street,
Chula Vista, California**

Project #A00412

Prepared for

PG&E Dispersed Generating Company, LLC
c/o Mr. Dale Mesple
1104 Rock Creek Way
Concord, CA 94521

Prepared by

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May 10, 2000

PG&E Dispersed Generating Company, LLC
c/o Mr. Dale Mesple
1104 Rock Creek Way
Concord, CA 94521

RE: Results of a biological field survey for the PG&E Otay River Valley Power Generator Project, City of Chula Vista.

Dear Mr. Mesple:

This letter presents the findings of a biological resources field study of the proposed PG&E Power Generating Facility Project in the City of Chula Vista. The project site is located at 3497 Main Street in the City of Chula Vista, just north of the City of San Diego (Figure 1). It is important to carefully evaluate the biological resources which could be affected by the proposed project for several reasons. First, the project site is in close proximity to well-known riparian resources, including sensitive species, in the floodplain of the Otay River. Secondly, the site adjoins lands designated as a Multiple Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) in the City of San Diego's Subarea MSCP. Finally, the City of Chula Vista is proposing a draft MSCP Subarea Plan which could provide "coverage" for any take associated with the development of this property.

GOALS

The goals of this study are two-fold. The first is to assess the nature of the onsite and near site vegetation and any related biological resources associated with this property. The second goal of the study would be to make specific recommendations regarding minimization and/or avoidance of project-related impacts which could result in a loss or degradation of sensitive biological resources associated with the property. Most significant is the presence or potential presence of riparian songbirds in the areas immediately south of the site. Any adverse impacts to the breeding success of these songbirds would be considered a significant affect of the proposed project. If riparian songbirds are determined to be present in the vicinity of the project site, noise from

power generating activities would need to be abated or reduced to a level not to exceed either the ambient or 60 dBA hourly LEQ at the edge of the occupied habitat for the duration of the bird breeding season, pursuant to the Wildlife Agencies standard.

METHODS

Field surveys of the subject site and adjoining areas were conducted on the mornings of 21 March and 29 April 2000. Weather conditions were generally conducive to field surveying, with clear skies and temperatures in the 70's on both days. The site and adjoining riparian area were slowly walked on each survey day, with particular attention paid to the areas where riparian birds were anticipated. The majority of the survey time was spent in the floodplain of the Otay River, as the site itself was of essentially no biological value.

Wildlife observations were made opportunistically. Binoculars were used to aid in observations and all wildlife species detected were noted. Animal nomenclature used in this report is taken from standard field references, including Stebbins (1985), AOU (1983), and Jones, et. al (1992).

RESULTS

Vegetation/Plants

The project site itself supports very little in the way of vegetation. The entire property is either developed or disturbed, with mostly bare soil or gravel covering the proposed power generating facility area. The site owners or leasers are currently storing an assemblage of old computer parts, automobiles, building supplies, etc. on this lot. The periphery of the property (along the fence margins, etc.) supports ruderal, weedy vegetation, including Tree Tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*), Chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum coronarium*), Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), Perennial Mustard (*Brassica geniculata*), and other weeds and naturalized ornamental. This includes a small drainage ditch which runs offsite along the western edge of the property.

Significant riparian woodland vegetation is present immediately beyond the southern fence line of the property. Indicators in this habitat include Black and Arroyo Willow (*Salix gooddingii*, *S. lasiolepis*), Mule Fat (*Baccharis glutinosa*), San Diego Marsh Elder (*Iva hayesiana*), American Bulrush (*Scirpus olneyi*), and Cattails (*Typha latifolia*). Also present in and along the periphery of the riparian area are noxious and weedy species, including Castor Bean (*Ricinus communis*), Tamarisk (*Tamarix*), Giant Wild Reed (*Arundo donax*), Indian Rice Grass (*Oryzopsis miliacea*), and others. These have degraded the riparian habitat to a degree, although this wetland is still of regional significance to area wildlife.

Animals

The only animals associated with the project site itself are locally-common species, such as Housefinch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), English Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), House Mouse (*Mus musculus*), Western Fence Lizards (*Sceloporus occidentalis*) and other vertebrates which are tolerant of or dependent upon development. The riparian area, however, supports a diversity of native species, including Song Sparrows (*Melospiza melodia*), Yellow Warblers (*Dendroica petechia*), Least Bell's Vireos (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), and others.

Sensitive Resources

Utilization of the subject property, *per se*, will have no direct, adverse impacts to area wildlife or sensitive species. Only insignificant impacts, as defined by CEQA, to locally-common species and weeds will result from site development. However, indirect impacts are considered potentially adverse and significant, as defined by CEQA. A number of obligate riparian songbirds were detected during the surveys for this report, including several sensitive species, and others are anticipated to occur in this area. All of these could be adversely affected by noise created by the proposed power generating facility. Such affects are measurable, and require specific mitigation to preclude losses of nesting recruitment and other possible impacts to native fauna.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to insure that noise levels generated by use of the proposed power generating facility will not have an adverse affect on breeding riparian birds or other riparian resources, several mitigation measures are recommended, in compliance with the City's draft Subarea Plan. A baseline ambient noise level (dBA hourly LEQ) should be assessed at the edge of the riparian habitat (Figure 2). This must be completed in a non-disruptive manner, with all hand-carried equipment, etc. remaining entirely outside of the riparian area. The noise generated by normal operations of the power generating facility must be compared with ambient levels. Should project-generated noise levels exceed the ambient at the edge of the riparian area (as measured), noise abatement, such as earthen berms, sound walls, etc. should be put in place to prevent levels from exceeding either the ambient at the edge of the riparian area, or 60 dBA hourly LEQ. This noise standards must not be exceeded at any time during the riparian bird breeding season, herein defined as between 15 March and 15 September. Periodic noise monitoring should occur for the life of the proposed project's Use Permit in order to insure compliance with the maximum 60 decibel standard as required by the Wildlife Agencies.

I hope that this information will useful in guiding your development project. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Very truly yours,



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Attachments:

- Figure 1. Project Location - Portion of "Imperial Beach" 7.5' Quadrangle.
- Figure 2. Vegetation Map - PG&E Power Generating Project, Chula Vista.
- Table 1. Flora detected - the PG&E Power Generating Project, Chula Vista.
- Table 2. Fauna detected - the PG&E Power Generating Project, Chula Vista.

Table 1. Flora Detected - the PG&E Power Generating Facility Project.¹

| <u>Scientific Name</u> | <u>Common Name</u> |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Plants</u> | |
| <i>Aptenia cordifolia</i> * | Red Apple Iceplant |
| <i>Arundo donax</i> * | Giant Wild Reed |
| <i>Baccharis glutinosa</i> | Mule Fat |
| <i>Brassica geniculata</i> * | Perennial Mustard |
| <i>Chrysanthemum coronarium</i> * | Chrysanthemum |
| <i>Iva hayesiana</i> | San Diego Marsh-elder |
| <i>Lampranthus</i> sp. | Ice Plant |
| <i>Malosma laurina</i> | Laurel Sumac |
| <i>Marrubium vulgare</i> * | Horehound |
| <i>Mesembryanthemum chrystallinum</i> | Ice Plant |
| <i>Mesembryanthemum edule</i> * | Hottentot Fig |
| <i>Nicotiana glauca</i> * | Tree Tobacco |
| <i>Oryzopsis miliacea</i> * | Indian Rice Grass |
| <i>Ricinus communis</i> * | Castor Bean |
| <i>Salix lasiolepis</i> | Arroyo Willow |
| <i>Salix gooddingii</i> | Southwestern Willow |
| <i>Scirpus olneyi</i> | American Bulrush |
| <i>Tamarix</i> sp. * | Salt Cedar |
| <i>Typha latifolia</i> | Cattails |
| <i>Urtica urens</i> * | Dwarf Nettle |

Total = 20 species detected. * = non-native or non-indigenous taxon.

¹ based on field surveys conducted 21 March and 29 April 2000.

Table 2. Fauna Detected - the PG&E Power Generating Facility Project.

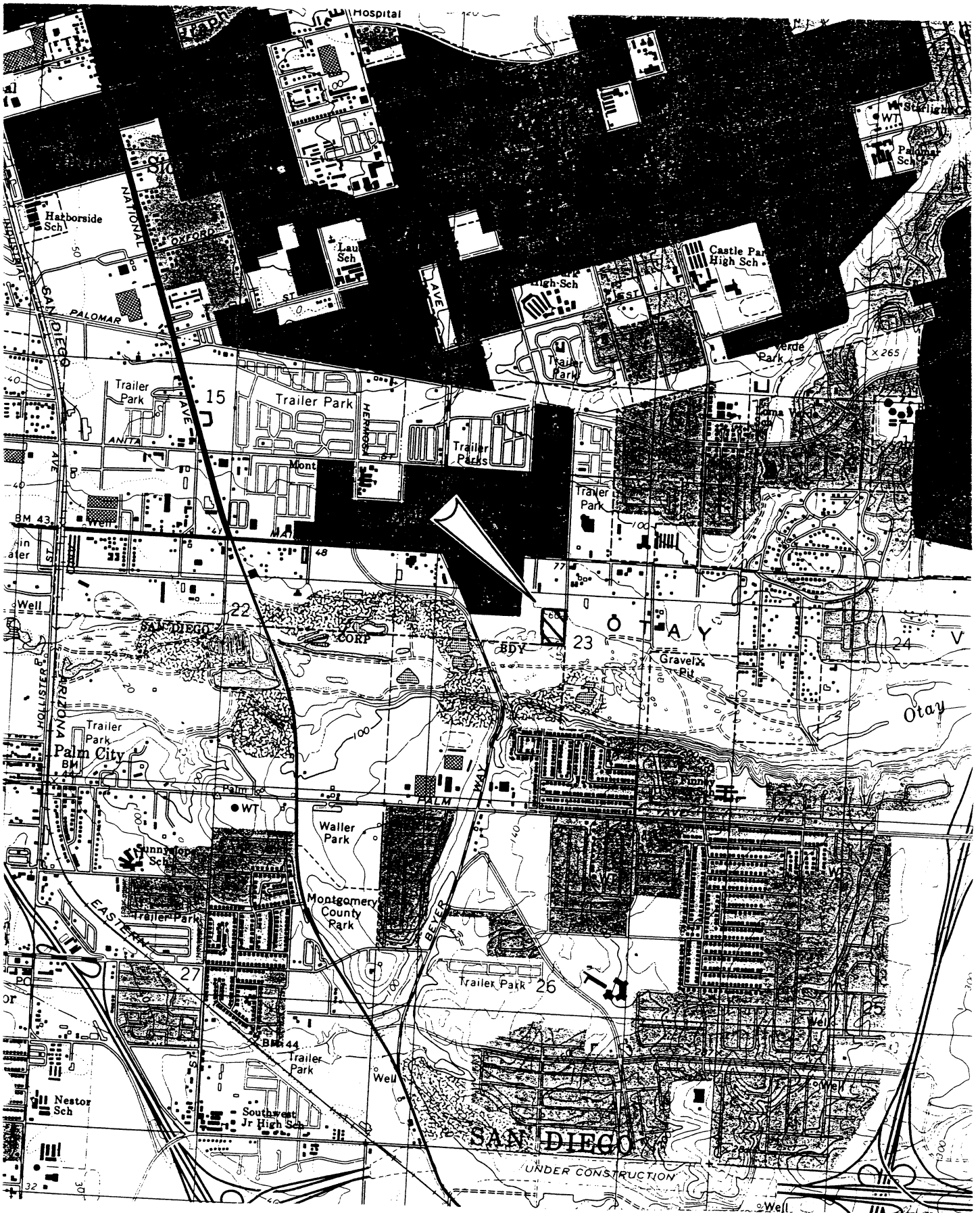
| <u>Scientific Name</u> | <u>Common Name</u> |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <u>Birds</u> | |
| <i>Archilochus anna</i> | Anna's Hummingbird |
| <i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i> | Housefinch |
| <i>Corvus corvax</i> | Common Raven |
| <i>Dendroica petechia</i> | Yellow Warbler |
| <i>Empidonax</i> sp. | Empidonax Flycatcher |
| <i>Geothlypis trichas</i> | Common Yellowthroat |
| <i>Icteria virens</i> | Yellow-breasted Chat |
| <i>Melospiza melodia</i> | Song Sparrow |
| <i>Mimus polyglottos</i> | Mockingbird |
| <i>Molothrus ater</i> | Brown-headed Cowbird |
| <i>Passer domesticus</i> | House Sparrow |
| <i>Passerina amoena</i> | Lazuli Bunting |
| <i>Psaltiriparus minimus</i> | Bushtit |
| <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> | Starling |
| <i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i> | Least Bell's Vireo |
| <i>Zenaida macroura</i> | Mourning Dove |
| <u>Mammals</u> | |
| <i>Didelphis marsupialis</i> | Opossum |
| <i>Mus musculus</i> | House Mouse |
| <i>Procyon lotor</i> | Racoon |
| <i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i> | California Ground Squirrel |
| <i>Thomomys bottae</i> | Valley Pocket Gopher |

Table 2. Fauna Detected - PG&E Power Generating Facility Project (cont).²

| <u>Scientific Name</u> | <u>Common Name</u> |
|--|---------------------------|
| <u>Fish, Amphibians, Reptiles</u> | |
| <i>Gambusia affinis</i> | Mosquito Fish |
| <i>Rana catesbeiana</i> | Bullfrog |
| <i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i> | Western Fence Lizard |
| <i>Uta stansburiana</i> | Side-blotched Lizard |
| ----- | |
| Total = 25 species detected | |
| (16 birds, 5 mammals, 1 fish, 1 amphibian, and 2 reptiles) | |

² based on field surveys conducted 21 March and 29 April 2000.

Figure 1. Project Location - Portion of U.S.G.S. "Imperial Beach" 7.5' Quadrangle.



[illegible]